

Theology vol 2.
T W O L E T T E R S

T O T H E R E V E R E N D

D R . K E N N I C O T T ,

Vindicating the J E W S from the

Charge of corrupting DEUT. xxvii. 4.

The first of which was published in the LI-
BRARY for July, 1761.

The Second is now first published, being an An-
swer to Dr. KENNICOTT's Remarks, in the LI-
BRARY for August, 1761; and a farther Illustration of the Argument.

L O N D O N : 1762.

Sold by JAMES WAUGH at the Turk's-Head in
Lombard-Street, and WILLIAM FENNER, at
the Angel and Bible in Pater-Noster-Rowe.

TWO LETTERS

DR. KENNICOTT

Change of name, Dec. xxvii. 4.

The list of which was published in the La-
bary for July, 1701.

The 2d part is now published, being an An-
swer to the Remarks in the La-
bary for August, and a further Illustration of the Argument.



TO W. D. B. 1702.
Sole by James Warren in the Town-Hall in
London, Street, and William Brown, at
the Sign of the Ship in Fleet-Street.



A LETTER to the Reverend Dr. KENNICOTT, vindicating the Jews from the Charge of corrupting Deut. xxvii. 4.

First published in the LIBRARY for July 1761.
p. 201. &c.

To the Reverend Dr. KENNICOTT.

S I R,

I Wish you much success in your laudable work of collating the Hebrew and Samaritan MSS. of the Old Testament, which are preserved in public or private libraries through Europe: at the same time I presume to dissent from you, in your heavy charge against the Jews, and to publish to the world my reasons, why I cannot acquiesce in your arguments. My animadversions upon them, I hope, are expressed with all respect, as indeed I have a sincere esteem of you, for your great acuteness and application, and, which is more excellent, your warm concern for the honour of the Sacred Volume.

You, Sir, are of opinion, that the Samaritans have not corrupted the text, Deut. xxvii. 4: but the Jews, who read *Ebal*, where they ought to have read *Gerizim*, as the name of the mountain, on which God commanded their fathers, after passing

the Jordan, to build an altar of stones, and to write all the words of his law.

The first argument, by which you support this accusation against them, is in substance this : 'That *Gerizim* was the mount of blessing, that is, the mount from which the benedictions were to be proclaimed, both by Hebrew and Samaritan penta-teuchs. Deut. xi. 29. xxvii. 12. It is not probable, that the altar would be appointed to be erected, and that the peace-offerings, which implied a state of favour with God, would be ordered to be sacrificed on Ebal, confessedly, the mount of cursing, or the mount from which the execrations were to be pronounced.'

But this argument seems to me unsatisfactory. I even improve it against you. For, if the Jews had vitiated the text Deut. xxvii. 4. to destroy the credit of the Samaritan temple on *Gerizim*, is it not likely, that they would have made a corruption also, in the places just quoted, which determine it to be the hill of benediction, and not have suffered it to retain any longer in their sacred books, such a mark of honour from God ? I omit, that they have attempted no change in those other passages, Gen. xii. 6, 7. xiii. 4. xxxiii. 20. from which their enemies plead, that Abraham and Jacob built altars unto God upon that mountain, and by their oblation of sacrifices there, consecrated it through all ages to his worship. For they might apprehend no need of such alteration to serve their cause, the inference being easy to be evaded. But how can it be accounted for, supposing they were so desirous to take from the Samaritans all pretence for the venerableness of their temple, as to substitute Ebal in the room of *Gerizim*, where the erection of the altar, and the inscription of the law upon it, were enjoined, that they should have allowed it still to bear so striking an evidence of divine respect as it does,

does, by being the hill of benediction; when by using the like freedom with the text, they might have stripped it intirely of any testimony thereof? From this, methinks, arises a strong presumption for the integrity of the Hebrew text, in opposition to the Samaritan, in the controverted place.

I observe farther. Since the curses, or denunciations of vengeance against transgressors, belonged to the law of God, as well as the blessings, or assurances of privileges to the obedient; it must be obvious, on a fair and impartial estimate of the case, that the law might with no less propriety be directed to be written on a structure raised in Ebal, the mount of execration and threatening, than on one raised in Gerizim, the mount of blessing and promise. It may be more difficult to reconcile the order about peace-offerings upon Ebal, which are said to denote a state of friendship with God; yet enough occurs to shew, that your conclusion is too hasty. For peace-offerings were presented not only by way of thanksgiving for the possession of good, but also by way of vow and request for obtaining it, Lev. vii. 11.—16. Besides, burnt-offerings were prescribed at the solemnity of reciting benedictions and curses by the Levites, and prescribed in such manner, as discovers they were to have the precedence, Deut. xxvii. 6, 7. Now burnt-offerings were destined for removing guilt, and averting calamity, as is plain from Lev. i. 4. and from the Jewish masters, quoted by Lightfoot, in his Temple Service, chap. viii. sect. 1. They therefore supposed the violation of the law of God, and obnoxiousness to his displeasure. And was it not fit they should be commanded to be made on Ebal? But if God only required one altar to be reared, where else could the peace-offerings, their appendages, be sacrificed, and the feast of joy upon them be celebrated?

Your

Your *second* argument is to this purpose. "It cannot be doubted that the Samaritans, when about to build a temple, would chuse some place signally honoured by God, or by his prophets, the more effectually to oppose the fame of the Jewish temple, and the more easily to vindicate their separate worship. When therefore Gerizim and Ebal were near together, and both in their possession, so that they might choose which they pleased to erect their temple upon, would they not prefer that mountain, which was esteemed to have been of old, by God's command, the place of his worship? Since then they did in fact choose Gerizim, is there not a strong probability, that the altar must have been erected, and the sacrifices presented on it formerly, and not on Ebal, which they rejected; especially, as the knowledge of its situation could not be lost in that country?"

No more, however, does this argument appear to have much weight. I allow, that the Samaritans were masters of Ebal, when they raised their temple on Gerizim: for I know no ground to deny it. So likewise they had many other places within their territory, where God had made extraordinary manifestations of himself to his servants, and received their pious homage. But would it follow, though we should not be able to assign a reason for their preference of Gerizim to Ebal and the rest, at this distance of time, and in this scantiness of history, that therefore Gerizim must have been the place, where the Israelites were to rear their altar, and write the law; and that the Jews have, from spite and animosity, misrepresented the direction of God concerning this matter, in their sacred books? I apprehend not. And yet it is not hard to account for their choice of Gerizim beyond Ebal, at least, though not thus distinguished, as may at first be thought. Gerizim, according to Maundrell, and
other

other travellers, quoted by yourself, was, in its nature and position, more proper for religious solemnities, and feasting, than Ebal : for, standing on the south of Sichem, with its surface declining toward the north, it was sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun, by its own shade, and was clothed with a beautiful verdure, and well watered. Whereas Ebal standing on the north of that town, its sides verging toward it, were more exposed to the direct beams of the sun, and was parched, and quite barren. The Samaritans, moreover, might have a tradition among them (whether it was true or false, makes no difference here) that Gerizim was the place where the ancient patriarchs worshipped Jehovah ; which Damascian affirms, and you think probable. They would see too, that from it God ordered the blessings to be published by the Levites. How natural then, for such reasons, to prefer Gerizim for the erection of their temple, especially as by putting Gerizim instead of Ebal in one text, they could wipe off the only seeming mark of ignominy and disgrace from it, and crown it with full and unmixed glory ?

To your *third* reason, which is, ‘ That it is more probable Gerizim was chosen by God for the erection of his altar, and the oblation of his sacrifices, and the engraving his law, because it was more cool, and fruitful, and pleasant ;’ I answer by this short question : Has it been God’s manner to bestow such marks of honour upon places, or to withhold them from them, according to their circumstances, as they have been less or more scorched, or fertile, and agreeable ? Till this is evinced, there can be no force in the argument.

No more does your *fourth* reason require a long reply. It is this : ‘ About 240 years after one of these two mountains had been consecrated, by an order to build an altar upon it, &c. when Jotham made

made his solemn oration, Judges ix. 7. he spoke from Gerizim. And is it not probable that he would, to give the greater weight to his address, speak from the mountain, which had the law and the altar upon it?

Why so? Supposing Gerizim and Ebal equally commodious for the delivery of his speech, might he not choose to harangue the Shechemites from the former, which was the mount of blessing, that he might animate his friends with stronger hopes of advantage from him, and strike his Enemies with greater awe, by denouncing curses upon them, even from that privileged mount?

And might he not much more pitch upon it for the scene of his discourse, though without both altar and law, if it was more convenient for the persuasion of Shechem's inhabitants, and for his own safety? So, truly, it seems to have been: for it is described by Josephus, as hanging over that town, which is more than can be said of Ebal, and as the highest of all the hills in that neighbourhood: therefore securing him more from the attempts of his foes. Besides, all know, that an accidental circumstance will determine a person to speak from one place rather than another, as the direction of the wind, the situation of the sun, vicinity to the place of his abode, or destination, and the like.

The *fifth* argument, in support of the charge of corruption against the Jews, is, 'That the Samaritans were less likely, from their character, to have altered the law of Moses, since they had a great veneration for it: for which you quote Huntington's letter to Ludolf in the year 1600, affirming, that one of them had a MS. copy of it hung about his neck, and carried it affectionately in his bosom. Maimonides also in the thirteenth century, and Sozomen, who was educated in their neighbourhood, and writing about the year 440, calls them

το Μωσῆος νομὴ μαλιστα ζήλωται, eminently careful to obey the law of Moses.

But these authorities are too recent to serve your cause, as this corruption must have been introduced into the text more than 400 years before Christ. On the other hand, there are the most authentic documents, and the most express attestations, of the high esteem and respect of the Jews for their law, in ages far more remote, and more near the period when this alteration in the text must have been made: for instance, in the times of Antiochus, about 160 years before Christ. Whilst it appears that the Samaritans were ready, on any danger of persecution, to renounce the practice of it, and to conform to the religious rites and ceremonies of the Greeks. See Prideaux's Connexion, year before Christ 168. and Joseph. Antiq. l. xii. c. 7, 8. and 1 Mac. ch. i. ii. This is so notorious, that it seems unnecessary to dwell upon it.

You argue *sixthly* from St. John's Gospel. 'There is recorded a conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, near this very mountain, who asked him, whether Gerizim or Jerusalem was the place where God was to be worshipped. But Jesus does not charge the Samaritans with having arrogated to Gerizim honours which did not belong to it, nor say, that Ebal was the mount on which God appointed his altar to be erected, and not Gerizim, as they pretended.'

But can Christ's omitting to reproach the Samaritans with the corruption of the text, for procuring respect to Gerizim, be a proof of the innocence of their ancestors, when he had only one conversation with them; and yet his forbearing to brand the Jews with any adulteration of it, though among them he had many conversations, be no argument that their fathers were undeserving of blame for it? Where is the fairness or candour of such a way of judging? And the nearer the period was, when

men should neither worship the Father in Gerizim nor in Jerusalem, the less needful was it for our Saviour to interpose in determining the controversy, in such a manner as to irritate or prejudice the parties respectively against himself, and thereby hinder the success of his ministry. Nevertheless, he seems to give Jerusalem the preference in these words, *Ye worship ye know not what* ; which every reader naturally understands of the conduct of the Samaritans of that age, rather than of any peculiar behaviour in their progenitors. For they are as if he had said, ' Ye have not just conceptions of God, when you serve him as a God who has chosen Gerizim for the place where sacrifices ought to be offered, and supplications presented to him.' But though he does, in my opinion, give Jerusalem the preference, it does not follow, that Gerizim was not the place pitched upon by God for raising the altar, and inscribing the law, after the passage of the Jordan. It might, and yet God might choose Jerusalem, to put his name there. Far less then can it be inferred, from his waving a decision of the debate altogether, that Gerizim was that place, and not Ebal.

As to the parable, Luke x. where a Samaritan is represented more compassionate and merciful, than even two Jews that ministered at the altar ; and the history Luke xvii. where the leprous Samaritan appears more thankful to God for his cure, than nine Jews, on their deliverance from the same distemper, you acknowledge, they are no proof of the character of their ancestors ; for which reason, they cannot be urged in this dispute. And, indeed, it may be questioned, whether they can be good evidence of the superior virtue of the Samaritan nation in general, even in Christ's age.

You proceed, *seventhly*, ' If from this worthy disposition of the Samaritans, and their profound veneration for the law of Moses, they should be thought less likely to have made the wilful corrup-

tion under consideration ; it may be now observed, that should this wilful corruption be charged upon the Jews, it will not be the first charge against them of this nature. Here you quote Jerome upon Gal. iii. 10. ' who intimates his suspicion, that the Jews had struck out from their copies those words *every man*, and *all things*, which were to be found in the Greek and the Samaritan, that they might not seem to be under the curse.'

But why do you omit, that Jerome himself entertained some doubt, whether the Apostle had not, as on other occasions, rather quoted the sense than the precise terms ? Besides, the suspicion of wilful corruption, to which he was most inclined, seems groundless : since the import of the execration, as it stands in the Hebrew copies, must be the very same, according to an established rule of logick, that an indefinite proposition requires the same interpretation, as that which is universally delivered. Can it be thought then, that the Jews should make this alteration in the text, by which they could gain nothing, especially, when they have left the book uncorrupted in other places, whereby their cause has suffered, and that of Christianity has been promoted ? it cannot. Accordingly father Simon, a person no way partial to the Jews, in his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, l. i. c. xi. at the end, confesses, that Jerome has refined too much against them here, the meaning of the passage being the same both ways.

You support the charge of wilful corruption against the Jews farther, from Judg. xviii. 30. But allowing, that the text should be read *Gershom the son of Moses*, instead of *the son of Manasseh* : how is the accusation justified ? that from deep concern for the honour of their lawgiver, and distressed that his grandson should appear the first idolatrous priest, they substituted Manasseh for Moses, adulterating the text.' The letter *nun* hath never been

put upon a level with the other letters, but either placed over the word, or suspended half way : or, if inserted in the middle, either magnified or diminished greatly beyond the common size in their copies : so that it may be said, that no fraud appears intended. Do Rabbi Solomon Jarchi's words prove there was ? ' Propter Mosi honorem scripta fuit litera *nun*, ut nomen mutaretur, & quidem scripta fuit suspensa, ad indicandum, quod non fuerit Manasses, sed Moses.' Though upon them you triumph thus. ' Here then we have the Jews convicted of wilful corruption, upon the most notorious of all evidences, their own confession.' To me they appear, on the contrary, to insinuate, that whatever foolish conceit led them to add *nun*, care was taken to shew every reader, that it was not genuine. By consequence then, Michaelis might acknowledge, the text ought to be read, *son of Moses*, instead of Manasseh, in consistence with his assertion, that there is no clear example of the Jews corrupting the sacred books with design. For all he says is, ' In Bibliis Manassis nepos dicitur, suspensa tamen, ac si suspecta esset, supra reliquas literas, *nun*.'

With the same view you instance in Josh. xv. 60. and quote Jerome on Micah v. 2. ' as thinking those eleven cities, which are in the Greek version, were omitted by the ancient Jews, in their Hebrew copies, out of malice to Christianity, because *Bethlehem Ephrata*, the place of Christ's birth, was one of them, and described to lie within the tribe of Judah.'

But Jerome determines not, whether they were passed over by the malice of the Jewish transcribers, that Jesus might not appear to be descended from the tribe of Judah, or whether they were added by the lxx interpreters. Moreover, it seems very rash, to impute their omission, supposing them genuine, to design. They might very well fall out by accident, the same words, *and their villages*, occurring immediately before, and after the words wanting.

Which

Which circumstance has been the occasion of frequent slips in transcribers, and deficiencies in manuscripts. Why should these towns have been left out, for the reason assigned? Is not Bethlehem mentioned, as belonging to Judah, in other places of scripture? You, say, never, by the name of Bethlehem Ephrata, except in Micah. But does not Micah sufficiently determine its situation, within the territories of that tribe? I apprehend, he does; so that they could profit nothing by the omission. And farther, allowing that such a consideration had swayed them, with respect to Bethlehem, why should they have passed over all the other names of towns? It had been enough to their purpose, to have left out Bethlehem alone.

As to Dr. Prideaux's charge of wilful corruption in Isa. xix. 18. I cannot find it in his Connexion, and therefore cannot reason upon it.

What then? though this charge of corrupting Deut. xxvii. 4. has not been the first charge of corruption against the Jews, yet none appear to be well founded. Have not many also, and of the learned, taxed the Samaritans with the same fault, as Hottinger, Lightfoot, Patrick, Calmet, and others? So that if there is any weight in this argument, there is as good evidence, that the corruption of the text was made by the Samaritans, as by the Jews.

You add, *eighthly*, 'Should the hatred of the Samaritans be objected, as what might urge them to commit any crime out of opposition to the Jews, certainly the hatred of the Jews is at least equally notorious.'

It is granted, and therefore no inference is made from it. But you subjoin: 'We find, Ezra iv. 1, 2. that upon the Jews return from their captivity, the Samaritans civilly offered to unite with them, saying; *Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do. And we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esarhad-den, king of Syria, who brought us up hither.* Which kind

kind and religious proposal was roughly rejected : thereby insinuating, that all the animosity had its rise from the pride of the Jews.

This must not be passed over. For surely, considering the character of some of the persons, who were concerned in making the reply, as Zerubbabel and Joshua, it ought to have been spoken of in softer and gentler terms. It may be even presumed, that they declined accepting the offer with the highest reason. Perhaps, they had sure intelligence, that they came not with a sincere intention of assisting them, but with an insidious design, to get an opportunity of doing them the greater mischief, by being admitted into their confidence, and into a share of the work. Be this as it will, they were not of the seed of Israel, but of the posterity of that mixed multitude, whom Shalmanazar, king of Assyria, sent from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, Sepharvaim, and other provinces, to inhabit the country of the ten tribes. As they therefore were not included in their number, to whom Cyrus's commission was directed, to build the house of God in Jerusalem, they could not be regularly admitted to join with them. Besides, they were not of their religion : for though they had worshipped the God of Israel, from the times of Esarhaddon, when infested with lions, yet they worshipped him in conjunction with other gods. Which was reason sufficient for the true worshippers of Jehovah to reject them from communion with them, as idolaters, 2 Kings xvii. 33. If afterwards, renouncing idolatry, they adored one God, and conformed more to the rites and ceremonies of the Jews ; this alteration is not placed earlier, even by Reland, who was favourable enough to them, than the time of Sanballat ; when it became necessary for the political interest of this man, and his son-in-law Manasseh, which was much later. Accordingly, we see, they did all they could, to hinder the erection of the second temple. The conduct of
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the Jews then, did not deserve such censure from you. The authors of the Universal History speak more modestly, vol. x. p. 185. 'Whether this refusal was really justifiable or not, we shall not pretend to determine, since the scripture does no where either praise, or discommend it.'

Ninthly, it is insisted by you, 'If the ancient Hebrew manuscripts had in the days of Josephus read Ebal, Deut. xxvii. 4. this author, a keen enemy of the Samaritans, had been most positive and express, that the altar was commanded to be built, and was afterwards set up on Ebal.'

If it should be answered you, that he is clear the altar was in fact erected upon Ebal, Antiq. v. i. 19. *και νειμας την γραβιαν, επι μεν τω Γαριζει ορει την ημισειαν ιησιν, επι δε τω Γιβαλω την ημισειαν, εν ω και ο βωμος εστι*, that is, 'having divided the army or host, he placeth one half on mount Gerizim, and the other half on mount Ebal, in which also the altar is.' You reply, that those words *εν ω και ο βωμος εστι*, in which also the altar is, are an interpolation; partly, because they are not ranged in the natural order; and partly, because he would thereby really contradict himself: which can scarcely be supposed of such a writer, upon a point so very interesting, and entirely national. For when he records the command, he represents, that the order was to build the altar between the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal.

But is there indeed evidence, that those words, which relate the erection of the altar upon Ebal, must be condemned and proscribed? All the manuscripts read them, without any material variation. The mention of its situation there seems to be introduced very easily, and without any force and constraint. Nor is there any such opposition betwixt them, and his account of the direction to rear it, as is objected. It runs thus: God commanded them *τον βωμον τε ανασησαι προς ηλιον ανισχοντα τετραμμενον, ε πορρω της Σικιμων πολεως μελαξυ δυοιν ορειν, Γαρισαις μεν*

το ἐκ δεξιῶν κειμενὸν, το δὲ ἐκ λαίων Γιζαλὸν προσαφορευομεν,
 ‘ to raise an altar, turned toward the sun-rising, not
 far from the town of Sichem, between two moun-
 tains, Gerizim lying on the right-hand, and Ebal,
 as it is called, lying on the left?’ And is not this
 very consistent with the history of the erection of the
 altar on Ebal? Not indeed, if μέλαξυ be referred to
 βαμῶ: for then, its situation would be ordered in
 the valley, between the two mountains: but if it be
 referred to Σικιμὸν παλαιῶν, as it ought to be, for there
 that town stood, according to the report of travellers.
 Says Benjamin Tudelensis in his Itinerary: ‘ From
 Sebaste I came to Neapolis, which is Shechem,
 and it lies in the valley between mount Gerizim and
 mount Ebal,’ p. 38. And says Maundrell, ‘ Geri-
 zim and Ebal are separated by a narrow valley, not
 above a furlong broad. And Naplosa, the ancient
 Sichem, is at the foot of, and under mount
 Gerizim.’

There is therefore no reason to pronounce the
 words above spurious. And that Josephus did not
 intend any tenderness toward the Samaritans, is plain
 from what he adds after the passage just quoted:
 ‘ That Moses commanded, no sacrifice should be
 offered on the altar which he ordered to be erected,
 in future time.’ Than which, what could be more
 opposite to their pretence, who held the altar, here
 spoken of, to be the very altar on which they of-
 fered victims to that day.’ Καὶ μετ’ ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν
 (the time of inscribing the law upon the altar)
 οὐκ ἐπένευσεν ἱερεῖον ἕτερον ὃ γὰρ εἶναι νομιμοῦν. Antiq. 4.
 viii. 44.

As to the contention between the Jews and Sa-
 maritans, before Ptolemy, about their respective
 temples, Jos. Antiq. 13. iv. 4. let it be granted,
 that the Samaritans were not heard in justification
 of their temple; that the advocates for the Jews did
 not confine themselves to arguments in behalf of the
 temple at Jerusalem, derived from the law of
 Moses.

Moses, as they had sworn to do upon pain of death, but brought some also from the successions of the high-priests, and from the liberalities of the kings of Asia unto it; that the Jews were in great anxiety about those, whose business it was to maintain the honour of their temple; and, finally, that they did not produce any old Hebrew manuscripts, to prove that the Samaritans had altered the text of Deut. xxvii. 4. when yet Ptolemy decreed to them the victory in the dispute. What will follow from all this? Not that the Jews vitiated the text, but only, that Ptolemy was partial, and that the Jews did not think, proving Gerizim was substituted by the Samaritans for Ebal, of any force to shew, that the temple built at Jerusalem was preferable, as certainly it was not, however effectual it might have been, to procure superior honour to one raised upon Ebal.

Finally, you have recourse to the book of Joshua, which the Samaritans reject. There it is said, chap. viii. 30—35. *Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses. — And they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, &c.* Yet you infer, the altar must have been erected, and the law written on Gerizim, because the descendents of Joseph, of which Joshua was, were stationed at Gerizim: ‘for, doubtless, he read the law, and pronounced the blessings, whilst some prince, by his command, pronounced the cursings on Ebal.’ Also, ‘because Levi was stationed on Gerizim, of which tribe were the priests and the sacrificers; and because Judah was there placed, from which tribe the Messiah was to arrive.’

But how strange this! when all manuscripts and versions, without any difference, assert that the altar

was reared on Ebal, and the sacrifices offered upon it! Is not the historian likewise positive, *that Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, and that there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel*, ver. 34. 35. And might not Joshua go from one mountain to the other, as the fulfilment, about the recital thereof, required? Might not the tribe of Levi also be stationed on Gerizim, and still attend the oblations on Ebal, which do not appear to have been prescribed to be made during that service? As to Judah, there is no solidity in the argument.

You reason also in behalf of your opinion, from Josh. xxiv. 25. *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord: And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake unto us. It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.* For you explain the sanctuary to mean the holy place on mount Gerizim. But why so? How does it appear that the stone, the memorial, or monument of the law, was placed on Gerizim, and not on Ebal? The sanctuary of the Lord was at Shechem; and Shechem was between them, as above said. A stone upon Ebal, therefore, might very well be represented by Joshua to have heard the words of the law, which he himself had pronounced by God's command.

Thus, Sir, I have examined your arguments; and I flatter myself, I have shewed, that they are insufficient to support your charge against the Jews. I am not sensible, that I have misrepresented them in any degree; and I hope you have no cause to complain of any unfairness in the discussion of

of them. If you are convinced by this letter, that your accusation has been ill founded, or precipitate, you will, no doubt, retract it; but if not, you will adhere to it, and, perhaps, endeavour to shew the world that these remarks are weak and futile.

I am, Reverend Sir,

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May 19. 1761.

Your humble Servant,

PHILALETHES

A SECOND LETTER to the Reverend Dr. KENNICOTT, upon the same Subject, being an Answer to his REMARKS in the LIBRARY for *August*, 1761. p. 263. and a farther Illustration of the Argument.*

S I R,

UPON reading your letter of August 14. in the Library of that month, I was surprized to find, that you taxed me with misrepresenting your arguments, in support of the charge of corruption against the Jews, as to Deut. xxvii. 4. in several instances; as I was conscious there had been no intention of it. Having borrowed your book from a friend, and being unwilling to detain it long, I co-

* This second Letter was intended for the Library. But the compilers of that work refused to insert it, as being too long, and not suited to their design. See the Library for November. p. 441. which has delayed the publication of it till now. Jan. 28. 1762.

was reared on Ebal, and the sacrifices offered upon it! Is not the historian likewise positive, *that Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, and that there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel*, ver. 34. 35. And might not Joshua go from one mountain to the other, as the fulfilment, about the recital thereof, required? Might not the tribe of Levi also be stationed on Gerizim, and still attend the oblations on Ebal, which do not appear to have been prescribed to be made during that service? As to Judah, there is no solidity in the argument.

You reason also in behalf of your opinion, from Josh. xxiv. 25. *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord: And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake unto us. It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.* For you explain the sanctuary to mean the holy place on mount Gerizim. But why so? How does it appear that the stone, the memorial, or monument of the law, was placed on Gerizim, and not on Ebal? The sanctuary of the Lord was at Shechem; and Shechem was between them, as above said. A stone upon Ebal, therefore, might very well be represented by Joshua to have heard the words of the law, which he himself had pronounced by God's command.

Thus, Sir, I have examined your arguments; and I flatter myself, I have shewed, that they are insufficient to support your charge against the Jews. I am not sensible, that I have misrepresented them in any degree; and I hope you have no cause to complain of any unfairness in the discussion
of

of them. If you are convinced by this letter, that your accusation has been ill founded, or precipitate, you will, no doubt, retract it; but if not, you will adhere to it, and, perhaps, endeavour to shew the world that these remarks are weak and futile.

I am, Reverend Sir,

G

May 19. 1761.

Your humble Servant,

PHILALETHES

A SECOND LETTER to the Reverend Dr. KENNICOTT, upon the same Subject, being an Answer to his REMARKS in the LIBRARY for *August*, 1761. p. 263. and a farther Illustration of the Argument.*

S I R,

UPON reading your letter of August 14. in the Library of that month, I was surprized to find, that you taxed me with misrepresenting your arguments, in support of the charge of corruption against the Jews, as to Deut. xxvii. 4. in several instances; as I was conscious there had been no intention of it. Having borrowed your book from a friend, and being unwilling to detain it long, I co-

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pied out what seemed the strength and substance of your arguments, that I might, at some season of leisure, examine them for my own improvement. — After the animadversions were made, it was proposed to have transmitted them to your self in the way of private letter; but this scheme was dropped upon the opinion of a learned and judicious friend in London, that it was from their nature more expedient they should be published for general information. — Accordingly they were sent to him with a particular request that he would consider their force and fairness; for by his final judgment they were to be suppressed, or communicated to the world. I could not therefore readily imagine, when such was the rise of the Remarks on your dissertation, such their original destination, and such their conveyance to the press, that there was any, at least material, misrepresentation in them. Nevertheless, as you have noted two or three principal errors, I determined to search with what justice you accused me of them, and candidly to acknowledge them, as a lover of truth, if the charge, on a repeated inspection of your book, should appear well founded. You have therefore my reply to your censure.

You blame me first “ with giving a greek quotation from Josephus, as being the whole passage “ in question, yet omitting the very words on “ which your supposition of an interpolation was “ chiefly grounded, and then, (the words being “ dropped on which you lay the greatest stress) asking, Is there indeed evidence, &c.” Now how does this matter stand? As it was my design, in the place referred to, to shew that the Jewish historian was clear the altar was raised upon Ebal, I passed that part of his words produced by you, which does not mark the situation of the altar expressly, being only a declaration that Joshua built it where Moses had given direction, and contented my self with citing the clause of them, which undeniably asserts its erection

erection on that mountain; adding however, that you pretended these words, *εν ω κ' ο βωμος εστι*, were an interpolation because they were not ranged in the natural order. But that you may have no cause of complaint hereafter, if you have had any colour for it before, through my study of brevity and conciseness, I will now give the objection in your own words, after quoting the entire passage in the original, with an English translation of it. Saith Josephus, *Antiq. v. 1. 19. Και χωρησας εντευθεν επι Σιχημων συν παντι τω λαω, βωμοντε ιστησιν οπου προειπε Μωσης, κ' νειμας την στρατιαν, επι μεν τω Γαριζει ορει την ημισειαν ιστησιν, επι δε τω Γιβαλω την ημισειαν, εν ω κ' ο βωμος εστι, κ' το Λευιτικον κ' της ιερας.* that is, And he, viz. Joshua, having departed thence unto Sichem with all the people, both erects the altar where Moses had commanded, and having divided the army, placeth the one half on mount Gerizim, and the other half on mount Ebal, in which also the altar is, and the Levites and the Priests." Say you, to evince that the words about the altar's standing upon Ebal are spurious, "Let us now consider this passage, Atque inde, &c." And he having departed thence unto Sichem with all the people, both erects the altar where Moses had commanded. "Could this author have avoided mentioning Ebal here, if he knew that to have been the place? It will be answered, that Ebal is mentioned afterwards. True. But the mention made of it afterwards is in so odd a manner, and the sentence is so confused, by means of the words, *εν ω κ' ο βωμος εστι*, in which also the altar is, (even though they should be placed in a parenthesis) that it may be submitted to the learned, whether these words are not an interpolation. For having before told us, that the altar was erected upon its proper spot at the very place where Moses had commanded, could he thrust in the mention of it again afterwards, and in a part of the sentence, where the insertion is not

"natural, and perplexes the sense? Had he origi-
 "nally said that the altar was erected upon E-
 "bal, the words would probably have stood thus:
 "βαμον τε ιστησιν επι τω Γιββαλω ορει, καθως προειπε Μωυσης,
 "he both erects the altar on mount Ebal as Moses
 "had commanded." Thus the reader hath before
 him the passage of Josephus, together with your
 objection at length against the genuineness of that
 part, which determines the erection of the altar on
 Ebal, and may judge whether the sense of the hi-
 storian is by it disturbed or made intricate, and
 whether it follows, because he had not mentioned
 Ebal as the place where Joshua built the altar in the
 beginning of the paragraph, but satisfied himself
 with saying, he erected it where Moses had com-
 manded, therefore he could not tell incidentally in
 the end of it, that it stood on that hill, when he
 named it as the spot on which half of the people
 were ranged.—Different men have different ways of
 introducing the same facts in their writings. But to
 me it appears, the position of the altar upon Ebal
 might have been narrated, either in the one or the
 other manner, without any shock, or embarrass-
 ment of a reader. And doubtless if the form of
 expressing it in the present copies of Josephus, had
 been so strikingly odd, and unnatural, as you con-
 tend, a zealot against the honour of Gerizim would
 not have pitched upon it, for asserting the altar to
 Ebal, but would have made good its claim to the
 possession of it in your way, which he might have
 done with still greater ease, even by writing three
 or four words, επι τω Γιββαλω ορει, instead of six,
 εν οχη ο βαμος εστι. With regard to the command of
 Moses, about rearing the altar, here alluded to,
 though you explained it in a sense inconsistent with
 its erection on Ebal, and indeed in your citation of
 it divided the words μεταξυ δυων ορων from the pre-
 ceding, ε πορρω της Σικιμων πολιων, contrary to Hud-
 son's, and all editions, I believe, without giving
 any

any notice of it to the reader, (as hath been done too in their translation, in my letter, through an oversight of the printer) by which method of pointing they look more favourable for your scheme; I have already endeavoured to shew that it does not contradict this account of the situation of the altar on Ebal, and now add, it is very unreasonable to suppose it repugnant to it. For would not any person of common understanding, who corrupted the text of the Jewish historian to contain the altar's position on Ebal, have looked back, and taken care, there should be no appearance of clashing, between the command of Moses and the execution, as he behoved to see a reference to his order, in the very passage he interpolated. Nevertheless, the direction of the prophet is expressed in so general terms, that there arises a strong presumption from this very circumstance, that there has been no vitiation of the book here, through malice at the Samaritans; for it runs thus, "Moses commanded them to build an altar, turned towards * the sun-rising, not

* *προς ηλιον ανισχοντα τετραμμενον* is thus translated by all, but it deserves to be considered whether it should not be rather, "Turned toward the elevated," that is, the meridian "sun" or the south. — This we easily conceive, as Ebal stood on the north of Sichem with its side verging towards it. — And in this sense the expression must be interpreted in Procopius, unless we impute to him the most gross ignorance of Geography. For in his first book concerning the Persian war, chap. 19. he says, *τα παλαιστινης ορια προσανισχοντα ηλιον ες θαλασσαν την ερυθραν καλυμμενην διακηντα*. The borders of Palestine toward the sun-rising or the east, say his editors, reach to the Red-sea. But that is false, as every boy knows. — It should be "the borders of Palestine toward the elevated or meridian sun reach, &c." which is true. Moreover, though *ανισχων ηλιος* sometimes signifies the rising sun, as in Aristides, who opposes it to *ηλιος δυσμερος*, the setting sun, whoever looks into Stephan's greek Thesaurus at the words *ανισχω* and *ανισχω* will soon perceive, that the phrase is capable of this meaning — for they are *Εμινεο*, &c. and *ακραι ανισχωσαι* are turned *Excelsa promontoria*, high promontories.

not far from Sichem between two mountains, Gerizim lying on the right-hand, and Ebal lying on the left.' Antiq. iv. 8. 44. Had there been any liberty taken to alter the text, for procuring glory to Ebal, and derogating from Gerizim, every one may be confident, this charge of Moses would have been made more determinate.——Allow me to conclude this article with observing, you may also think I did you an injury in omitting what you have, p. 66. "There remains one remark to be made on that passage in the 4th book, where Josephus speaks of the command given by Moses, which is further favourable to mount Gerizim. Had Josephus said that Ebal was to be the place, from whence they were to declare the curse of God, against all such as should neglect God's worship, and forget his commands, this would have been urged as a clear allusion to the altar, and the law, as being on Ebal. It must be then equally fair to infer, that he alludes to the altar, and the law, as being upon Gerizim, since expressly speaking of Gerizim, he mentions the worship of God, and keeping his laws." *ὡς πρὸς τὰς, &c.* and first he ordered those standing on Gerizim to pray the most excellent things, to persons zealous about the worship of God, and the observance of his laws, and who did not reject what Moses had said." But can any thing be weaker than this reasoning? what fondness for an hypothesis does it betray? In the book of Deuteronomy a charge is given by Moses thus, These tribes, viz. shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan—And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse.'——Josephus takes things in this order, and very naturally describes the character of those, for whom the blessings pronounced from Gerizim were intended, according to Deut. xi. 26, &c. afterwards subjoining, that Moses ordered the other tribes, whom he had already described standing on Ebal,

to put curses upon them, who should transgress, nay the tribes, to echo back the things said to one another, for their confirmation, that is, the tribes on Ebal the benedictions, and the tribes on Gerizim the curses. *εὐφημεῖν δὲ τὰς ἑτέρας, καὶ τῶν παλιν εὐχομένων, τὰς προσηγμένους ἐπαινεῖν· ἐπειτὰ τοῖς κατὰ ταῦτα παραβησομένοις κατάρας τιθεσθαι ὑποφώνησας ἀλλήλαις ἐπὶ κυρώσει τῶν λεγόμενων.* Joseph. Antiq. iv. 8. 44. I leave it to every impartial person to decide, whether what is said about praying felicity on Gerizim, to the zealous of God's worship, and laws, will support your conclusion, that the altar was built on it. If Ebal's title had been no better to its erection upon it, truly it would have been very lame, and an author would only have discovered himself much prepossessed in its favour by pleading it.

Your next charge is, "that you had mentioned
 " an observation of St. Jerome, that some names
 " at Josh. xv. 60. may have been omitted by
 " the ancient Jews out of malice to Christianity."
 Here the writer of the letter says of you: "It seems
 " very rash to impute the omission of these words,
 " supposing them genuine to design, when they
 " might very well fall out by accident." There
 can be no occasion for this *gentleman's anger* here,
 because you say the very same thing. "This re-
 " markable omission was probably owing at first to
 " some transcriber's mistake." Suffer me now
 first to represent Jerome's words concerning this
 matter, and then to make some remarks on your
 complaint. Jerome in his commentary on Micah
 v. 2. writes thus, *Legimus juxta 70 duntaxat in-*
terpretes in Jesu Nave, ubi tribus Judæ urbes et
oppida describuntur inter cætera etiam hoc scrip-
tum, "Thaeco et Ephratha, hæc est Bethleem,
&c. civitates undecim et viculi earum," quod
nec in Hebraico nec apud alium invenitur interpre-
tem, et sive de veteribus libris erasum sit malitia
Judæorum, ne Christus de tribus Judæ ortus vi-
deretur,

deretur, five a 70 additum, nequaquam liquido cognoscentes certum quid novimus. " We read according to the 70 interpreters only in the book of Joshua the son of Nau, where the cities and towns of the tribes of Judah are described, this also written among other things, " *Thaeco et Ephratha, this is Bethlehem, &c. eleven cities and their villages,*" which is neither found in the hebrew text, nor with another interpreter, and whether it hath been erased by the malice of the Jews, lest Christ should appear sprung from the tribe of Judah, or added by the 70, we do not clearly know any thing certain." And having thus produced Jerome's words, may I not ask whether you have not expressed your self in such a manner concerning him, as tends to lead the reader into a belief, that he spoke with less doubt and hesitation about the malicious corruption of the passage by the Jews, than in fact he does. But to wave this, you introduce Jerome's observation, as quoted by you, under your seventh argument, viz. " that should this wilful corruption of Deut. xxvii. 4. be charged upon the Jews, it will not be the first charge against them of this particular nature." And you preface it in this manner after labouring to fix upon them two instances of wilful corruption, " It should not be forgot that St. Jerome thinks these cities may have been omitted by the ancient Jews out of malice to christianity, because Bethlehem Ephratah (the place of Christ's nativity) is one of these cities, and is described as in the tribe of Judah." You moreover reject Dr. Wall's opinion, who thinks it less likely that the Jews should designedly omit Bethlehem here, because that place is mentioned as belonging to Judah in several other parts of scripture, for, after telling it, you say, " But then though Bethlehem is elsewhere mentioned as belonging to Judah, yet I believe Bethlehem Ephratah is nowhere mentioned in that manner, excepting here, and

and in the prophecy of Micah before referred to, pag. 57, 58." I might therefore from all these circumstances easily suppose you adopted the conceit of a wilful corruption, without any limitation, and overlook the few words by you now quoted. "This remarkable omission was probably owing at first to some transcriber's mistake." Yet I do not recollect that I did, nor does it appear from my letter. For after all do you reject the sentiment of malicious corruption? Far from it. Your words are, "and therefore though this remarkable omission was probably owing at first to some transcriber's mistake, it's not being reinserted might be owing to the reason specified by St. Jerom." So fond you are of blackening the Jews, that though you allow these verses in Joshua probably fell out at first by mistake, you suppose the omission was continued from hatred of our religion. Might I not therefore say without incurring any blame, "Moreover it seems very rash to impute their omission, supposing them genuine, to design, &c." To your hypothesis all is fairly applicable.—I further take notice now, that in pag. 560, 561. you say, by way of supplement to your reasoning on this head, "This supposition, that the 11 cities were omitted accidentally, (on account of the same word occurring at the end of two adjoining verses) obviates the difficulty mentioned by Reland, who thinks the Jews could not omit these cities designedly," and you give us "some reflections of that learned writer, which greatly countenance the belief of this considerable though unintended omission." But I wish you had obliged the publick with a detail of his difficulty as you call it, that they might have judged, whether your supposition that the 11 cities were omitted accidentally at first, but wilfully afterwards, does indeed obviate, or remove it. My reason is, that I think his arguments are as strong and cogent against the malicious omission of them

afterwards, as at first. Since you have declined it, I will lay them before the world. That author in his *Palastine*, p. 644, 645. after professing his opinion that nothing had been erased by the Jews (therefore, not the passage under consideration) from the hebrew bible, their veneration for this sacred book being greater than to allow them to vitiate it industriously, merely to hurt their enemies, and knowingly expose themselves to divine displeasure, he proceeds: "But if we should believe they could have arrived to so great folly and impiety, they would have erased the more plain testimonies concerning Christ which are still read in their books, and which christians were already using against them, as about the glory of the second temple, about the 70 weeks of Daniel, about the abject state of the Messiah, *Isai. liii.* about Bethlehem the native place of Messiah, *Micah v. 2.* add, that some among them confess, Bethlehem, even Bethlehem of Judah, would be the country of the Messiah." Then having cited them he goes on. "Truly it was more for the interest of the Jewish cause, that the prophecy of Micah should be erased about Bethlehem, from which the governor in Israel was to issue, than that 60th verse in the 15th chapter of Joshua, where Bethlehem is only mentioned among the cities of Judah, and whence the christians can obtain no assistance to their cause. For if any one say, thence it may be shewed that Bethlehem was situated in Judah, and so that Christ was of Judah, first from the place of nativity, it would not follow that he was of Judah; but when the Gospel-history informs us that Mary, because she was of the family of David, and so of Judah, went up to Bethlehem the city of David, we are thence instructed that Christ was of Judah. Further, it was not necessary we should learn from this place that Bethlehem was in Judah, because *Judg. xvii. 7.* Bethlehem is called of Judah, and *Micah v. 2.*

and if they had even exceedingly desirous to cancel Bethlehem from that catalogue of towns, what had the ten towns annexed thereunto deserved? Why must they also have been struck out? You will say, because the sum of eleven towns, which is added, would have discovered the sacrilege, if Bethlehem alone had been left out, as then only ten would have remained. But would not he who dared to efface the name of Bethlehem from the sacred book, have dared also to substitute ten for eleven, especially as it greatly concerned the Jewish nation to know all the towns which had formerly been in their land." Now do not these considerations as much press your hypothesis of a spiteful omission of the verses by the Jews afterwards, when there had been only a casual neglect of them at first, as that of their malicious omission from the beginning? I apprehend they do. Nor will I insist on your passing over some observations of Reland about Bethlehem, which may be thought to militate much against the arguments, by which you support your opinion, though they occur in the midst of these reflections you quote as favourable to it, viz. that besides mention of Bethlehem-Judah. Judg. xvii. 7. to distinguish it from Bethlehem in the tribe of Zabulon, Josh. xix. 15. there is mention of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem, Gen. xlviii. 7. (whence also we read of Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah, Ruth i. 2. and 1 Sam. xvii. 12.) and of Bethlehem a fenced city in Judah, 2 Chron. xi. 6. See his *Palastine*, p. 642. and 643. On the whole let the impartial judge, whether you needed to raise any cry of error and misrepresentation against me here. I say nothing about your imputation of anger to me, being willing to be condemned by them, if they discern any marks of undue displeasure.

Follows now the third article against me. It is that I have said, "All Michaelis fais, is, In Bibliis
" Manassis nepos dicitur, suspensa tamen, ac si sus-

“ pecta esset, supra reliquas literas, Nun ; thereby
 “ leading the generality of readers to think I had
 “ quoted him, fully as to Judges xviii. 30. when
 “ yet you had quoted from him a great deal more,
 “ which was much to the purpose : and then that
 “ I have asserted the letter Nun had never been put
 “ upon a level with the other letters, which you
 “ did not expect to find any one doing after you
 “ had given notice that in some copies (written as
 “ well as printed) it was put upon a level, and ex-
 “ pressed in the common way.” But as to the first
 branch of it, I think you have no cause to find
 fault. You had said in your dissertation, pag. 55
 —57. Michaelis has judiciously given his opinion
 against the legitimacy of the word Manasseh, Judg.
 xviii. 30. for in the third volume of the Gottingen
 commentaries he has the following note : “ In the
 “ printed Hebrew bibles Jonathan is called the
 “ grandson of Manasses, yet the letter Nun, in
 “ which alone the name of Manasses differs from
 “ that of Moses, is suspended above the other let-
 “ ters, as if it had been suspected. From the tra-
 “ dition of the fathers Abendana narrates that this
 “ Nun was added for the honour of Moses, lest his
 “ grandson should appear the first Idol-priest. The
 “ name of Moses is also read in the vulgate Latin.
 “ To me it seems manifest that not Manasses but
 “ Moses is to be understood. For how could a Le-
 “ vite have Manasses for his progenitor ?” And
 you had hereon argued thus : “ But then, as this
 worthy author allows in this volume, that the word
 was originally Moses, and that Manasses is printed
 falsely in the Hebrew text, (it may be added, and
 falsely expressed also in the Hebrew Mss.) And as
 he here allows that the Jews wilfully altered the
 text out of regard to the honour of Moses, it is
 evident that he has been very lately convinced of
 the Jews having wilfully corrupted their text at
 least in one instance, after having advanced the con-

trary opinion in the preceding volume, viz. that it could not be proved hitherto, by any sure example that the Jews corrupted with design, even one place of their sacred books." Now with reference to this, after observing that the Jews by writing *Nun* suspended took care to shew every reader it was not genuine, whatever foolish conceit led them to add it, I had remarked, "By consequence then Michaelis might acknowledge the text ought to be read Son of Moses, instead of Manasses, in consistence with his assertion, that there is no clear example of the Jews corrupting their sacred books with design. For all he says is in Bibliis, &c. "In the bible he is called the grandson of Manasses, yet *Nun* is suspended above the other letters, as if it was suspected." And have I herein done you any wrong? If I did not quote the rest of Michaelis's words produced by you, it was, besides aiming at brevity, because, though to the purpose of shewing that *Nun* was added by the Jews, which was supposed, they were not to the purpose of shewing that it was added in such a manner, as would found the charge of design in any, and much less of a conspiracy in the nation, to pass it as authentick. This every one may now perceive on comparing. I might therefore say, all Michaelis says, &c. because he there says it was printed suspended, and he never says any thing which implies his knowledge that it was put on a level with the other letters. "But I cannot judge so certainly about this matter, having no opportunity to look into the Gottingen commentaries. Nor is it of any importance in the debate about Deut. xxvii. 4. whether my apology for Michaelis be just or not.

You have more reasonable ground of complaint against me for saying that *Nun* hath never been put on a level with the other letters. For in some editions of the bible, and *Mss.* too, I now perceive, it hath been expressed the same way as they. But
though

though it have been so, it will not follow that it was introduced by the Jews with a fraudulent intention. The Rabbi's have freely confessed that it was added by their fathers to take away the great reproach from the name and family of Moses, which does not consist with a scheme in the nation to impose it as genuine. Besides, it would seem, Rabbi Solomon Jarchi who lived about 650 years ago, knew no Mss. in which it was not written suspended, for he saith as quoted by you, Propter, &c. "The letter Nun was written for the honour or credit of Moses, that the name might be changed, and was written suspended to denote that it was not Manasses but Moses." Its being reduced then to the ordinary place will be peculiar to the latest Mss. which you say in general are the most faulty, and may very well have been owing to the ignorance of some transcribers. Accordingly Grotius says, the more correct Hebrew Mss. have the Nun suspended. *Hebræi codices habent מְנָשֶׁה* fed emendatiores, Nun suspenso, quo Masoretæ indicarunt hanc literam esse *μαρτυροῦσαν*. Vide Poli Synops. in locum, and you your self only say, that in some copies it wears the exact garb of the genuine letters, not in the greater number. — Does this look like any deliberate plan of the Jews to impose it as of equal authority with the other letters? which yet is necessary to make the charge of wilful corruption here similar to yours against them about Deut. xxvii. 4.

Finally you are much displeased because I say, speaking of Joshua viii. 30, 35. "All Mss. without any difference assert the altar was on Ebal," you ask, can this possibly be known at present? have I my self examined all the Hebrew Mss? or have I seen a collation of them made by any other person? If a collation has never yet been made, a writer must be very precipitate and inattentive, to talk at present of all the Hebrew Mss. reading so
and

and so, in any one verse of the Old Testament. And this is the more surprizing here, you conclude, because I am pleased to call your collation of the Mss. a laudable work, and am so obliging as to wish you much success in it." Strange! Could I not say all the hebrew Mss. assert that the altar was erected on Ebal, Josh. viii. 30. &c. though I had neither examined all extant my self, nor seen a collation of them by others, without being pronounced a precipitate and inattentive writer? Hath not this form of expression been used by the most cautious and considerate authors, as Prideaux, Walton, (see p. 22. 27. of your dissertation) &c. without exposing them to any censure? Well it might indeed, since it only signified that all copies, as far as inspected, agreed to confirm a reading. Which must be the case as to the present point, since you have not mentioned any variation of the books. No more can you, as is evident, reasonably question the sincerity of my declaration about your work. I truly still think it worthy of commendation, whether the discoveries by it shall be more or less material, and rejoyce in the liberalities of his majesty, the two universities, and particular persons both among clergy and laity, to enable you to carry on your undertaking, and wish you health to compleat it.

Thus, Sir, I have considered your charge of errors against me, and would have done it in the library of September, had that of August, containing the same, come to hand more seasonably. But, as I am more than 200 miles distant from London, it was the 26th of that month ere it reached me. I will only add, it cannot weigh much, either with me or the world, that you still think it most probable that the Jews corrupted the text Deut. xxvii. 4. unless it be shewed that the opinion is retained on good grounds. How far you can allow your self to vindicate it against this attack, in consistency

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with

with your obligations to the publick, I pretend not to determine. Yet many think you have no title to intrench your self behind these, being as much bound by your salaries to consider difficulties proposed against a notion that may have such influence in your choice of readings, as to collate Mss. If I could have been sensible of any prejudice arising to you from this letter's being anonymous, I would have annexed my name to it. As I am not able to discern any hurt that circumstance can do you, tho' solicited to make my self known, I continue,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

G

Octob. 8. 1761.

PHILALETHERS.



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